Requirements List
To Become an ECF User

Hardware

1) A PC with a Pentium III chip or better with 64MB of RAM or better.

We recommend at least 64MB RAM and preferably 128MB or higher. The faster the better! Slower PC's beginning with at least a 486DX chip at 66MHZ will work but so poorly that it would not make economic sense to try. Apple computers and workstations using Linux may also be used. The computer should have adequate hard disk storage; we recommend 10 gigabytes (GB) or more.

2) Access to the Internet.

A direct Internet connection or a 56K V.90 modem. The faster the Internet connection, the easier ECF is to use. We think that using a 56K dial-up modem will, unfortunately, be unsatisfactory to anyone making more than very occasional use of CM/ECF. To transmit or download a document containing 10 scanned pages will take about 10 minutes using a 56K modem. Consequently, we strongly recommend that participants obtain fast access to the Internet using DSL, cable, or T-1 lines.

3) A scanner.

Documents that are not on a user's computer in the form of word processing files must be scanned in order to file them electronically. An example is a deed to secure debt attached to a proof of claim. Scanners range in price from $50 to tens of thousands of dollars. We recommend that users start with a flatbed scanner. If a user anticipates imaging many documents, the user may wish to consider a scanner to which a sheet feeder can be attached.

4) A printer.

Notwithstanding the benefits of electronic filing, we all know that paper will not disappear in the near future. A durable laser printer will initially cost more than an inkjet printer but in the long run will be cheaper because the per page cost of toner is much less than the per page cost of an ink cartridge.

Software

5) An Internet Browser.

Netscape Navigator is currently the recommended internet browser, specifically version 4.7. (We do NOT recommend Netscape 6.x) Microsoft Internet Explorer is also supported and we recommend version 5.5. Newer versions of either browser are likely to work just fine, but please understand that only the recommended versions are supported. Netscape Navigator may be downloaded without charge from Netscape's web site (www.netscape.com). Because the program is a very large set of files, however, the process would be very time-consuming for all but the fastest Internet connections. For users without high speed connections, ordering a CD containing Netscape Communicator through the afore-mentioned web site would be more efficient. There is a small charge for this CD. Other internet browsers not mentioned here may also work but are not specifically supported.

6) A word processing application.

7) Adobe Acrobat (or other software that allows you to create PDF files).
All ECF documents MUST be submitted in PDF format. Adobe originated the PDF format and is the most common application used to create PDF files. The latest version is 5.0. Version 4.0 works fine. The software may be purchased at the Adobe Store on Adobe's website at www.adobe.com. The standard installation of Acrobat 5.0 installs a ("print") driver for Acrobat 5 Distiller writer. (Distiller is an Adobe software product that is used to convert a document to PDF format and is particularly useful if the word processing document includes graphics.) The standard installation, however, does not install the Acrobat 5 Writer, which is what one normally would use to convert a "plain vanilla" word processing document to PDF. We strongly recommend that users installing Acrobat 5.0 use the "custom" method of installation so as to include the Acrobat 5 Writer, which converts files into PDF significantly faster with significantly smaller PDF files than the writer employed by the Distiller.

8) An e-mail application and a valid e-mail account.

Miscellaneous Requirements

9) A thorough understanding of Maine's "Standing Order regarding administrative procedures for electronically filed cases" and the related document "Administrative Procedures for filing, signing, maintaining and verifying pleadings and other documents in the electronic case filing". Both of these documents can be found on our web site at www.meb.uscourts.gov.

If you have any questions regarding these requirements, please call the Clerk's Office:

Portland: 207-780-3482 x233 (Kelli)
Bangor: 207-945-0534 x226 (Nancy)

Or visit our web site at: **www.meb.uscourts.gov**